

**Fact Sheet**  
**February 2003**

# **Weemes Elementary School**

## **Proposed Playground Expansion**



### **PROPOSED REMOVAL ACTION**

*DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. The Department's mission is to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.*

**State of California**



**California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency**



#### **Introduction**

As you may already know from our September 2002 survey letter, officials at the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) would like to expand the size of the playground at Weemes Elementary School. The land that was chosen for the expansion is located next to the school at 1260 West 36<sup>th</sup> Place in Los Angeles (please see map on page 3).

Because of new State laws, new schools and property expansions for schools are reviewed and investigated by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), a branch of the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA).

#### **THIS FACT SHEET WILL TELL YOU:**

- What we found
- How it may have gotten there
- If there is risk to the public
- What we plan to do with the polluted soil
- How you can tell us what you think
- Who to contact for more information

#### **What we found**

Under the oversight of the DTSC, LAUSD did an environmental

#### **COMMUNITY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

Weemes Elementary School  
Auditorium  
1260 West 36<sup>th</sup> Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
**March 11, 2003, 6:00 p.m.**

DTSC will give a public presentation to provide you with information about the proposed Removal Action Workplan and findings of the environmental investigations for this proposed playground expansion. The DTSC presentation will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. during the regularly scheduled Kids Watch Meeting.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

February 12, 2003-March 13, 2003

We invite you to provide us with your comments and questions about the soil removal plan for the Weemes Elementary School Proposed Playground Expansion. The purpose of the public comment period is to give the community an opportunity to submit comments on the removal action plan. On the back of this Fact Sheet we provide information on to whom to write your comments, and where to find the technical reports that provide detailed environmental information.

*The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, or for more information about DTSC see our web site at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov).*

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investigation known as a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (PEA) at the site. This work is done to find out if any harmful chemicals in the soil for this proposed new school playground expansion area may be considered a health risk for future students. The investigation detected lead, believed to be from lead-based paint, and residential pesticides in soil samples around the homes at the properties located at 1201-1203, 1205, 1207, and 1215 West 37th Street. The levels of these chemicals are above DTSC health risk standards set for proposed school properties. As a result of the findings, LAUSD is proposing a site soil cleanup known as a removal action. DTSC found that a removal action should be conducted to remove and eliminate the risk posed by these potentially harmful substances. Once the contaminated soil is removed, the potential risk associated with these materials will be gone and the proposed expansion will meet environmental standards for schools.

### **Site Description**

The proposed playground expansion site occupies 0.64 acres and includes four parcels at the corner of West 37<sup>th</sup> Street and Catalina Street. Residential homes currently occupy each of the parcels. Surrounding land use is primarily single and multi-family residential homes. The site is bordered to the north and west by the existing Weemes Elementary School playground.

### **Environmental Investigation Results**

The results of the investigation indicated that lead-based paint and residential pesticides in soils are a concern at the site. Elevated levels of lead were found in shallow soils (0 to 0.5 feet below ground surface). Elevated levels of pesticides were found in shallow soils (0 to 0.5 feet below ground surface) and up to two feet below ground surface in one location. LAUSD recommended a Removal Action Workplan (RAW) be completed to remove the impacted soils. This is a plan in which several different ideas or plans are developed

to deal with the pollution at the site LAUSD would like to add to the existing campus area. The site does not currently pose a risk to students and staff at the existing school because they are not playing on the soil.

### **How did the lead and pesticides get there?**

Additional work to find out where the chemicals came from was done in September 2001. It is believed the lead is from lead-based paint that was commonly used on homes until the 1970s. When paint gets old, paint chips can fall to the soil and pollute it. The household pesticides could have been from a person using too much or spilling the container, contaminating the soil at these homes which are over 80 years old.

### **What we plan to do (Removal Action Workplan)**

The Draft RAW, prepared in December 2002, identifies and screens possible removal action alternatives. Alternatives were screened and evaluated on the basis of their effectiveness, ability to implement, and cost. Screening of several cleanup techniques using these criteria was conducted to select removal actions for further evaluation. Based on this screening, three possible alternatives were selected for further evaluation:

- Alternative 1 – Don't do anything (always offered, it is used as a form of measurement)
- Alternative 2 – Cover affected areas with concrete or blacktop surface
- Alternative 3 – Dig it up and send it to offsite disposal

Alternative 3, digging up the soil and offsite disposal, has been selected and is what LAUSD would like to do. It was found to be the most protective of human health and the environment. In addition, it could be easily done and is cost effective. Approximately 660 cubic yards (955 tons) of contaminated soil will be removed. The proposed removal area generally extends from 20 to 30 feet north of the sidewalk/southern boundary, to the northern edge of the four properties.

**How we would like to clean it up  
(Proposed Removal Action Activities)**

Prior to the removal action activities, the existing residential structures (including foundations) will be demolished and all debris removed. The soil removal fieldwork will be conducted with DTSC oversight. Excavation areas will be secured using temporary fencing or barriers to reduce the potential for unauthorized personnel to enter the work area. The excavation will take place when school is not in session (such as on weekends), during the approximate hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

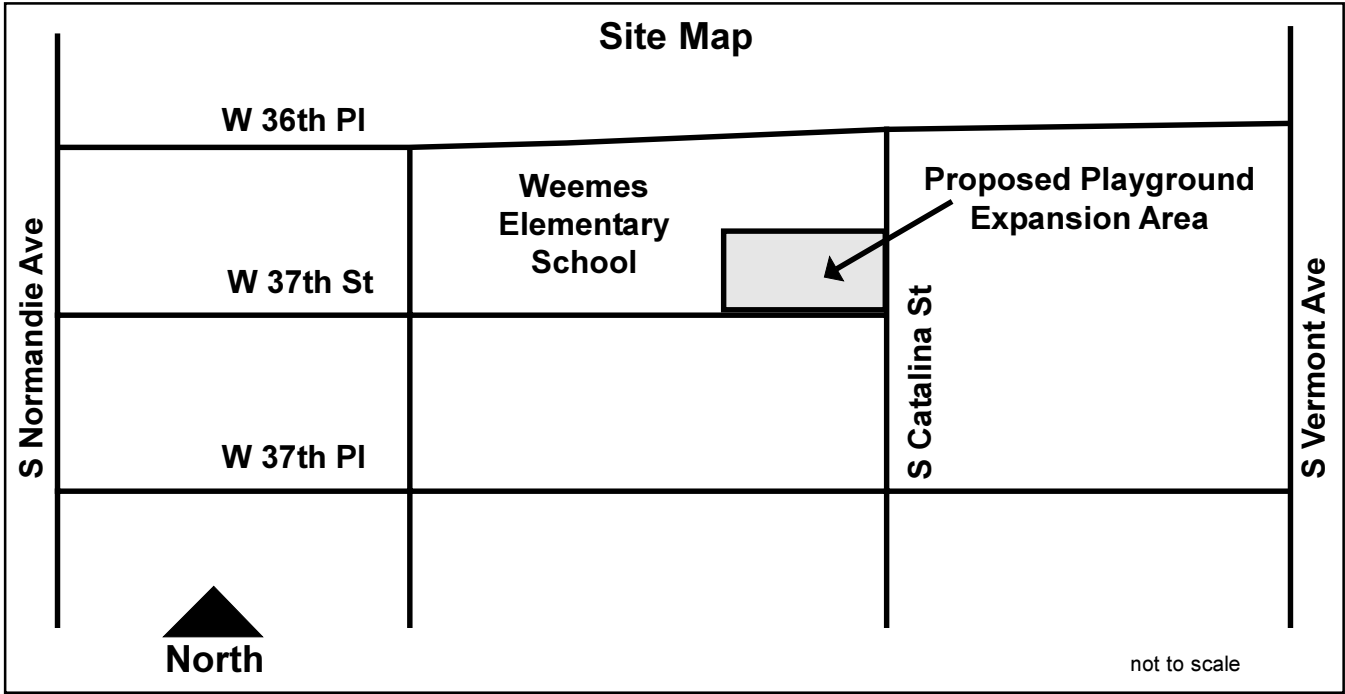
Regular construction equipment, such as a front-end loader equipped with a backhoe, will be used to dig up the soil and the place the soil in piles on plastic sheeting. The removed soil will be temporarily piled at designated areas and then directly loaded into trucks. The removed soil will then be taken to a disposal facility. We expect that 50 truckloads will be needed to haul the soil from the site. The trucks will enter and exit the site from Catalina Street, turning right on 36<sup>th</sup> Place, then left on Vermont Avenue to continue to Interstate 10 (Santa Monica Freeway) (See Map).

The soil will be dug up in a manner that reduces dust. The excavation areas will be watered while the work is being done. Trucks will maintain slow speeds while on the property. In addition, the trucks will be covered after the soil is loaded to prevent it from spilling out of the truck during transport to the disposal facility. Airborne dust monitoring will be conducted to verify and document dust suppression efforts.

When the digging and removal work is complete, LAUSD will retest the soil to make sure that all the contaminated soil has been removed. A completion report will be prepared and submitted to DTSC for review and approval. The areas will be refilled and compacted with certified clean soil.

**Notice of Exemption (NOE)**

DTSC has prepared a draft Notice of Exemption (NOE) for this project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The NOE document states that the project will not have a significant negative effect on the environment because of the relatively small volume, short project duration, and the controlled manner in which contaminated soils will be excavated, loaded onto trucks and taken offsite for disposal.



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## **We want to know what you think and want you to get involved**

Before making a final decision on the Weemes Elementary School Proposed Playground Expansion Draft Removal Action Workplan, DTSC will receive comments during the **30-day public comment period**, which ends on March 13, 2003. Comments may be submitted in writing to: *Ms. Jennifer Jones, Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 1011 N. Grandview Avenue, Glendale, CA 91201*. Comments must be postmarked by March 13, 2003.

After the public comment period, DTSC will evaluate all of the submitted comments and make any relevant changes to the cleanup plan. If the Draft RAW is approved, fieldwork may begin in April 2003, after the homes are demolished. The removal action fieldwork, including soil excavation, transportation of excavated soil, and confirmation soil sampling will take an estimated two to four days.

### **Have Questions?**

If you have questions regarding the DTSC investigation or the proposed removal action please contact: Eloy Florez, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, (818) 551-2875; Jennifer Jones, DTSC Project Manager, (818) 551-2973; or Jeanne Garcia, Media Contact, (818) 551-2176.

*Si desea información en español, comuníquese con el: Sr. Eloy Florez, Especialista en Participación Pública de el DTSC, al (818) 551-2875.*

**LAUSD Contact:** Kelly Rowe, Project Manager, LAUSD Office of Environmental Health and Safety, (213) 633-8812. For information related the school expansion design and construction please call: Joseph Pina, LAUSD Community Outreach Office, at (213) 633-8982.

*Si desea información en español, comuníquese con el: Joseph Pina, Oficina de*

*Community Outreach del LAUSD, al (213) 633-8982 o por correo electrónico: [jpina@laschools.org](mailto:jpina@laschools.org).*

### **Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals**

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at (1-888-877-5378) to reach DTSC Public Participation Specialist, Eloy Florez, at (818) 551-2875.

### **Project documents are available for public review at the following locations:**

Department of Toxic Substances Control  
Regional Records Office  
1011 N. Grandview Avenue  
Glendale, CA 91201  
Contact: Jone Barrio  
Phone: (818) 551-2886  
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Weemes Elementary School  
Administration Office  
1260 West 36<sup>th</sup> Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
Phone: (323) 733-9186

Exposition Park Regional Branch Library  
3665 S. Vermont Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90007  
Phone: (323) 732-0169  
Hours: Monday-Thursday 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m.  
Friday-Saturday 10:00a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
Sunday 1:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Office of Environmental Health and Safety  
355 South Grand Avenue, Sixth Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90071  
Contact: Kelly Rowe  
Phone: (213) 633-8812  
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Los Angeles Unified School District  
Office of Communications  
333 S. Beaudry Avenue, First Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Contact: Susie Solano  
Phone: (213) 241-6766  
Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.